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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2018
TAGS: PREL UNSC GG UV
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: BURKINA FASO WILL NOT PUBLICLY CONDEMN RUSSIA

REF: SECSTATE 92371

Classified by ADCM Joann Lockard for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On August 28, Acting DCM, accompanied by PolOff, presented reftel demarche to Vincent Zakane, Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although Zakane agreed in principle with the U.S. position, he called Russian control over the break-away regions a "fait accompli," and added that Burkina feels "uncomfortable" in the middle of an argument that will, realistically, not change anything on the ground. Zakane followed the demarche with a phone call to ADCM, informing Post officially that Burkina Faso would not make public statements condemning Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Furthermore, he reported that Burkina Faso's permanent representative to the U.N. had been instructed only to "observe" any emergency Security Council meeting.

¶2. (C) Zakane explained that in his opinion, public condemnation of Russia by Burkina Faso would not have any affect on Russia's actions. Zakane emphasized that the major Western powers had already vehemently condemned Russia to no avail. Zakane opined that Russia's actions and the ensuing regional tensions could not be resolved at the UNSC level because of the nature of the organization and Russia's ability to veto resolutions. He added that the situation on the ground was evolving daily and the UNSC was ill-equipped to react swiftly enough to have significant impact.

¶3. (C) Comment: Burkina Faso does not like to, and does not have a tradition of, making public declarations regarding world events. If the opportunity presents itself, the GOBF would probably vote to support the U.S. position, but is digging in its heels regarding a unilateral public condemnation. Reading between the lines in Zakane's answers, Burkina does not want to get between the U.S. and Russia in "a new Cold War."

JACKSON